

CAREER OF SECT LEADER GOES BACK TO FOUNDING OF CHURCH GROUPS IN 1915

1/24/29 Accusations of Fraud, Brutality to Children, Immorality Fail in Court Tests

William E. Riker, head of Holy City, which he owns and operates as a private municipality in the Santa Cruz mountains, has been before the spotlight of publicity on numerous occasions. He first came into notice when he founded a cult known as the "Perfect Christian Divine Way" in Los Angeles and San Francisco in 1915. Branches were established at Alma, Santa Clara county, and other points.

In May of 1919 Riker was arrested for operating a buzz-saw at his cult headquarters in San Francisco.

In October of 1921 Riker and his wife, Lucille Riker, were indicted on charges of fraud, grand larceny, embezzlement and immorality. The case was later dismissed.

SUED FOR \$100,000.

In November of the same year Riker was made a defendant in an action brought against him by Alexander Schwartz, who with his wife and eight children, was a member of the Holy City cult. Schwartz asked \$100,000 damages. Mrs. Schwartz filed an affidavit during the case that the women at Holy City were common property along with chattels in general. The Schwartz family was ordered out of the colony.

In the same month, Riker was also sued for \$20,000 damages as the result of an automobile accident.

In May of 1922 four children were taken from a home operated by the Rikers on the ground that it was not a fit place for minors. This was followed by a general investigation of the colony's activities in August, which got nowhere.

CHILD SUIT FAILS.

In April of 1923 the Holy City colony was again the center of an investigation, this time involving brutality to children. A trial followed and again Riker won, the charges being dismissed.

In July an attempt was made to wreck the power plant and telephone sub-station of Holy City by two men, who "jammed" the power station machinery. The mystery of this action was never solved.

In January of last year, Riker was sued by Mrs. Evelyn Rosencrantz on a charge of breach of promise. Mrs. Riker came forward with a marriage certificate which showed that she and Riker had been married more than eleven years. Nothing came of this suit, Mrs. Rosencrantz herself going to jail on another charge.

In the operation of his colony Riker has advocated outdoor living, celibacy, raw food, and a waiver of world goods, when joining the colony. His agents distribute tracts and literature to motorists driving through the town.

CHARLATAN'S RECORD; ALWAYS ESCAPED CONVICTION

THIS is by no means the first time that "Father" William E. Riker, founder and "King" of Holy City, has been under fire.

The chronology of his arrests and prosecution since founding the "Perfect Christian Divine Way" cult of San Francisco and Los Angeles in 1915 reads like a page out of a police docket.

The charges range from accusations of fraud and immorality to the famous half-million dollar love balm suit that was brought against him by Mrs. Evelyn

Rosencrantz a year ago. Conspicuous among them were allegations of weird "free love" practices among his disciples, and sensational charges of child torture. Always, however, he has escaped conviction.

Here are the highlights of his record:

MAY, 1919 — Arrested for operating a buzz saw late at night at P. C. D. W. headquarters, San Francisco.

OCTOBER, 1921 — "Father" Riker and "Mother Lucille" indicted on charges of fraud and immorality. Indictments included grand larceny,

embezzlement, conspiracy against public morals and obtaining money under false pretenses.

OCTOBER, 1921 — Agnes Jenkins citation showing that her husband had deserted her and their 8-year-old child to become a member of the cult; Alex Schwartz, who, with his wife and eight children, lived in the cult nearly three years, also a witness against the Rikers before the Grand Jury.

NOVEMBER, 1921 — Sued by Alexander Schwartz, Orland rancher, for \$100,000 damages. Schwartz testified that shortly after they (his

family and himself), arrived in Holy City, he complained of Riker's association with Mrs. Schwartz. Riker then assigned two women to become companions to Schwartz. Conditions became so distasteful at Holy City that Schwartz was forced to quit.

NOVEMBER, 1921 — Sued for \$20,000 damages as a result of an auto accident.

MAY, 1922 — Four children taken from a home conducted by the Rikers on the ground that it was not a fit place for the children.

MAY, 1922 — Schwartz

trial. Testimony so vile minors had to be forbidden to enter courtroom. Testimony offered showing that Riker had used funds of colony for illegal operations performed by a woman doctor in San Francisco. Said wives and husbands were separated and classified into groups by the Rikers, and that "acts were carried out at the decree of 'Father' Riker, whom none of the cult members dared disobey."

AUGUST, 1922 — Investigation made of treatment of children.

SAN JOSE, APRIL, 1923 — Sensational charges of child torture. Testi-

mony disclosed members of cult in various insane asylums. Children "stretched with ropes."

MAY, 1923 — Freed charges of "bestiality children."

JULY, 1923 — Plot wreck and destroy the power plant at Holy City frustrated.

JANUARY, 1928 — Sued by Mrs. Evelyn Rosencrantz, three-time San Quentin convict, for \$500,000 breach of promise. Also known as Patricia Reid. Blackmail, forgery and embezzlement charged against her record. She was to have been the "Perfect Woman" in Riker's Master Movie.